



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/954,627	09/17/2001	Jeffrey C. Groat	13358.3USUI	6847

23552 7590 07/14/2003

MERCHANT & GOULD PC
P.O. BOX 2903
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903

EXAMINER

BUCHANAN, CHRISTOPHER R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3627

DATE MAILED: 07/14/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/954,627

Applicant(s)

GROAT ET AL.

Examiner

Christopher R Buchanan

Art Unit

3627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-40 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 3
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collins in view of Fassett, Jr.

With regard to claim 1, Collins discloses a method for managing asset tracking information in a supply chain comprising a plurality of entities capable of accessing a centralized asset tracking datastore (abstract, see Fig. 1), the method including recording information related to the asset (30) in an independent datastore (32) by an upstream entity (col. 2 line 52+, see Fig. 2), identifying the asset with a unique ID code (31, col. 2 line 45+), associating the recorded information from the upstream entity with the ID code (col. 2 line 5+, col. 3 line 28+, entity could be anywhere in supply chain), recording information related to the asset in the independent datastore by a downstream entity (col. 2 line 52+, col. 3 line 1+), and associating the recorded information from the downstream entity with the ID code (col. 3 line 1+). With regard to claims 2 and 5, a record related to the asset is created in a database that contains information provided by the supplier entities (col. 1 line 56+, col. 2 line 1+).

The method of Collins differs from the claimed invention in that the entities are not shown to be suppliers [claim 1] and in that the asset is not identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record [claims 3, 4, and 6]. However, it would be obvious to one skilled in the art that the entities could be a variety of people, including suppliers.

Fasset discloses a method for managing asset tracking information in a supply chain in which a plurality of supplier entities (col. 1 line 40+) are capable of accessing a centralized asset tracking datastore (abstract, see Figs. 1-4) and the asset is identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record (col. 2 line 20+).

It would have be obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the method of Collins so that the entities are suppliers and the asset is identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record, as taught by Fasset, to give users access to all suppliers by using a standardized product ID system.

3. Claims 7-33, 39, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collins in view of Fasset, Jr.

Collins discloses a method for managing asset tracking information in a supply chain comprising a plurality of entities capable of accessing a centralized asset tracking datastore (abstract, see Fig. 1), the method including recording information related to the asset (30) in an independent datastore (32) in communication with a server (40) by

Art Unit: 3627

an upstream entity (col. 2 line 52+, see Fig. 2), identifying the asset with a unique ID code (31, col. 2 line 45+), associating the recorded information from the upstream entity with the ID code (col. 2 line 5+, col. 3 line 28+, entity could be anywhere in supply chain), recording information related to the asset in the independent datastore by a downstream entity (col. 2 line 52+, col. 3 line 1+), and associating the recorded information from the downstream entity with the ID code (col. 3 line 1+). Multiple assets, each with a unique ID code, can be associated with one another, for example, with subcomponents of a complete component (col. 2 line 35+). A record related to the asset is created in a database that contains information provided by the supplier entities (col. 1 line 56+, col. 2 line 1+). A tag attached to the asset displays the asset ID code and can be read (optically, etc.) to access the asset record from the database (col. 1 line 35+, col. 1 line 55+, col. 3 line 29+).

The method of Collins differs from the claimed invention in that the entities are not shown to be suppliers and in that the asset is not identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record. However, it would be obvious to one skilled in the art that the entities could be a variety of people, including suppliers.

Fasset discloses a method for managing asset tracking information in a supply chain in which a plurality of supplier entities (col. 1 line 40+) are capable of accessing a centralized asset tracking datastore (abstract, see Figs. 1-4) and the asset is identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record (col. 2 line 20+).

Art Unit: 3627

It would have be obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the method of Collins so that the entities are suppliers and the asset is identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record, as taught by Fasset, to give users access to all suppliers by using a standardized product ID system.

4. Claims 34-38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Collins in view of Fasset, Jr.

Collins discloses a product handled in an asset tracking supply chain (abstract) the product comprising an asset (30) identified with a unique ID code (31, col. 2 line 45+), wherein a tag attached to the asset displays the asset ID code and can be read (optically, etc., many ways are well-known in the art) to access the asset record from a database (col. 1 line 35+, col. 1 line 55+, col. 3 line 29+).

The method of Collins differs from the claimed invention in that the asset is not identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record.

Fasset discloses a method for managing asset tracking information in a supply chain in which the asset is identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that displays information from the asset record (col. 2 line 20+).

It would have be obvious to one skilled in the art to modify the method of Collins so that the asset is identified with a unique URL corresponding to a webpage that

Art Unit: 3627

displays information from the asset record, as taught by Fasset, to give users access to all suppliers by using a standardized product ID system.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Barnes et al. disclose a system that allows users to order goods from a supplier and track them over the Internet. Radican discloses a system for creating records for inventory items in a database and using the information to track the location of the items. Guidice et al. disclose a system for tracking goods ordered from a supplier online.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christopher R Buchanan whose telephone number is 703-306-5782. The examiner can normally be reached on M-T 9-7.

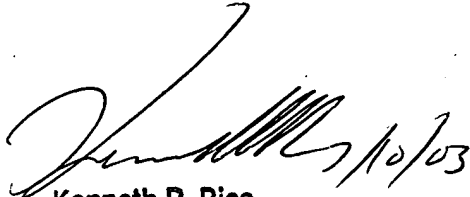
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Olszewski can be reached on 703-308-5183. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-7687 for regular communications and 703-305-7687 for After Final communications.

Art Unit: 3627

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.

CRB

Christopher Buchanan
July 10, 2003


Kenneth R. Rice
Primary Examiner